The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:20 p.m. at the Hotel Matignon. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to the French National Assembly in Paris

June 7, 1994

Mr. President, distinguished Deputies, representatives of the people of France, it is a high honor for me to be invited here, along with my wife and our distinguished Ambassador, Pamela Harriman, to share with you this occasion. There is between our two peoples a special kinship. After all, our two republics were born within a few years of each other. Overthrowing the rule of kings, we enthroned in their places common ideals: equality, liberty, community, the rights of man.

For two centuries, our nations have given generously to each other. France gave to our Founders the ideas of Montesquieu and Rousseau. And then Lafayette and Rochambeau helped to forge those ideas into the reality of our own independence. For just as we helped to liberate your country in 1944, you helped to liberate our country two full centuries ago.

Your art and your culture have inspired countless Americans for that entire time, from Benjamin Franklin to John and Jacqueline Kennedy. In turn, we lent to you the revolutionary genius of Thomas Jefferson, the fiery spirit of Thomas Paine, and the lives of so many of our young men when Europe's liberty was most endangered.

This week you have given us yet another great gift in the wonderful commemorations of the Allied landings at Normandy. I compliment President Mitterrand and all the French people for your very generous hospitality. I thank especially the thousands of French families who have opened their homes to our veterans.

Yesterday's sights will stay with me for the rest of my life, the imposing cliffs of Pointe du Hoc, the parade of our Allied forces on Utah Beach, the deadly bluffs at bloody Omaha, the rows upon rows of gravestones at our cemetery at Colleville.

D-Day was the pivot point of the 20th century. It began Europe's liberation. In ways great and small, the Allied victory proved how democracy's faith in the individual saved democracy itself. From the daring of the French Resistance to the inventiveness of the soldiers on Omaha Beach, it proved what free nations can accomplish when they unite behind a great and noble cause.

The remarkable unity among the Allies during World War II, let us face it, reflected the life-or-death threat facing freedom. Democracies of free and often unruly people are more likely to rally in the face of that kind of danger. But our challenge now is to unite our people around the opportunities of peace, as those who went before us united against the dangers of war.

Once in this century, as your President so eloquently expressed, following World War I, we failed to meet that imperative. After the Armistice, many Americans believed our foreign threats were gone. America increasingly withdrew from the world, opening the way for high tariffs, for trade wars, for the rise to fascism and the return of global war in less than 20 years.

After World War II, America, France, and the other democracies did better. Led by visionary statesmen like Truman and Marshall, de Gaulle, Monnet, and others, we reached out to rebuild our allies and our former enemies, Germany, Italy, and Japan, and to confront the threat of Soviet expansion and nuclear power. Together, we founded NATO, we launched the Marshall plan, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and other engines of economic development. And in one of history's great acts of reconciliation, France reached out to forge the Franco-German partnership, the foundation of unity and stability in modern Western Europe. Indeed, the members of the European Union have performed an act of political alchemy, a magical act that turned rubble into renewal, suspicion into security, enemies into allies.

Now we have arrived at this century's third moment of decision. The cold war is over. Prague, Warsaw, Kiev, Riga, Moscow, and many others stand as democratic capitals, with leaders elected by the people. We are reducing nuclear stockpiles, and America and

Russia no longer aim their nuclear missiles at each other. Yet once again, our work is far from finished. To secure this peace, we must set our sights on a strategic star. Here, where America and our allies fought so hard to save the world, let that star for both of us, for Americans and for Europeans alike, be the integration and strengthening of a broader Europe.

It is a mighty challenge. It will require resources. It will take years, even decades. It will require us to do what is very difficult for democracies, to unite our people when they do not feel themselves in imminent peril to confront more distant threats and to seize challenging and exciting opportunities. Yet, the hallowed gravestones we honored yesterday speak to us clearly. They define the price of failure in peacetime. They affirm the need for action now.

We can already see the grim alternative. Militant nationalism is on the rise, transforming the healthy pride of nations, tribes, religious and ethnic groups into cancerous prejudice, eating away at states and leaving their people addicted to the political painkillers of violence and demagoguery, and blaming their problems on others when they should be dedicated to the hard work of finding real answers to those problems in reconciliation, in power-sharing, in sustainable development. We see the signs of this disease from the purposeful slaughter in Bosnia to the random violence of skinheads in all our nations. We see it in the incendiary misuses of history and in the anti-Semitism and irredentism of some former Communist states. And beyond Europe, we see the dark future of these trends in mass slaughter, unbridled terrorism, devastating poverty, and total environmental and social disintegration.

Our transatlantic alliance clearly stands at a critical point. We must build the bonds among nations necessary for this time, just as we did after World War II. But we must do so at a time when our safety is not directly threatened, just as after World War I. The question for this generation of leaders is whether we have the will, the vision, and yes, the patience to do it.

Let me state clearly where the United States stands. America will remain engaged in Europe. The entire transatlantic alliance benefits when we, Europe and America, are both strong and engaged. America wishes a strong Europe, and Europe should wish a strong America, working together.

To ensure that our own country remains a strong partner, we are working hard at home to create a new spirit of American renewal, to reduce our budget deficits, to revive our economy, to expand trade, to make our streets safer from crime, to restore the pillars of our American strength, work and family and community, and to maintain our defense presence in Europe.

We also want Europe to be strong. That is why America supports Europe's own steps so far toward greater unity, the European Union, the Western European Union, and the development of a European defense identity. We now must pursue a shared strategy, to secure the peace of a broader Europe and its prosperity. That strategy depends upon integrating the entire continent through three sets of bonds: first, security cooperation; second, market economics; and third, democracy.

To start, we must remain strong and safe in an era that still has many dangers. To do so we must adapt our security institutions to meet new imperatives. America has reduced the size of its military presence in Europe, but we will maintain a strong force here. The EU, the WEU, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, and other organizations must all play a larger role. I was pleased that NATO recently approved an American proposal to allow its assets to be used by the WEU. To foster greater security cooperation all across Europe, we also need to adapt NATO to this new era.

At the NATO summit in January, we agreed to create the Partnership For Peace in order to foster security cooperation among NATO allies and the other states of Europe, both former Warsaw Pact countries, states of the former Soviet Union, and states not involved in NATO for other reasons. And just 6 months later, this Partnership For Peace is a reality. No less than 19 nations have joined, and more are on the way. Russia has expressed an interest in joining.

The Partnership will conduct its first military exercises this fall. Imagine the transformation: Troops that once faced each other

across the Iron Curtain will now work with each other across the plains of Europe.

We understand the historical anxieties of Central and Eastern Europe. The security of those states is important to our own security. And we are committed to NATO's expansion. At the same time, as long as we have the chance, the chance to create security cooperation everywhere in Europe, we should not abandon that possibility anywhere.

There are signs that such an outcome may be possible. Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus have now committed to eliminate all the nuclear weapons on their soil. And by this August we may well see all Russian troops withdrawn from Eastern Europe and the Baltics for the first time since the end of World War II.

Do these developments guarantee that we can draw all the former Communist states into the bonds of peaceful cooperation? No. But we would fail our own generation and those to come if we did not try.

Do these arrangements mean we can solve all the problems? No, at least not right away. The most challenging European security problem and the most heartbreaking humanitarian problem is, of course, Bosnia. We have not solved that problem, but it is important to recognize what has been done, because France, the United States, Great Britain, and others have worked together through the United Nations and through NATO. Look what has been done. First, a determined and so far successful effort has been made to limit that conflict to Bosnia, rather than having it spread into a wider Balkan war. Second, the most massive humanitarian airlift in history has saved thousands of lives, as has the UNPROFOR mission, in which France has been the leading contributor of troops. We have prevented the war from moving into the air. We have seen an agreement between the Bosnian Muslims and the Croats. Progress has been made.

What remains to be done? Today the United Nations has put forward the proposal by Mr. Akashi for a cessation of hostilities for a period of several months. The United States supports this program; France supports this proposal. We must do all we can to get both sides to embrace it.

Then, the contact group is working on a map which can be the basis of a full and final cessation of hostilities there. We must do all we can, once all parties have been heard from, to secure that agreement.

And finally, let us not forget what has happened to make that more likely, and that is that Russia has been brought into the process of attempting to resolve this terrible crisis in what so far has been a very positive way, pointing the way toward a future in which we may all be able to work together to solve problems like this over a period of time. We must be patient. We must understand that we do not have total control of events within every nation. But we have made progress in Bosnia, and we must keep at it, working together, firmly together, with patience and firmness, until the job is done. We can do this if we stay together and work together.

The best way to sustain this sort of cooperation is to support the evolution of Europe across the board. We must also have an economic dimension to this. We must support Europe's East in their work to integrate into the thriving market democracies. That brings me to the second element of our strategy of integration. Integration requires the successful transition to strong market economies all across broader Europe.

Today, the former Communist states face daunting transitions. Our goal must be to help them succeed, supporting macroeconomic reforms, providing targeted assistance to privatization, increasing our bonds of trade and investment. That process invariably will proceed slowly and, of course, unevenly. It will depend in part on what happens within those countries. We have seen voters in former Communist states cast ballots in a protest against reform and its pain. Yet as long as these states respect democratic processes, we should not react with too much alarm. The work of reform will take years and decades.

Despite many problems the economic reforms in Europe's East have still been impressive. Russia's private sector now employs 40 percent of the work force, and 50 million Russians have become shareholders in privatizing companies. In Prague last January, I said the West needed to support such reforms by opening our markets as much as

possible to the exports of those nations. For if our new friends are not able to export their goods, they may instead export instability, even against their own will.

We can also support other reforms by stimulating global economic growth. One of the most important advances toward that goal in recent years has been the new GATT agreement. It will create millions of jobs. France played an absolutely pivotal role in bringing those talks to fruition. I know it was a difficult issue in this country. I know it required statesmanship. I assure you it was not an easy issue in the United States. We have issues left to resolve. But now that we have opened the door to history's most sweeping trade agreement, let us keep going until it is done. My goal is for the United States Congress to ratify the GATT agreement this year and to pursue policies through the G–7 that can energize all our economies.

We have historically agreed among the G–7 nations that we will ask each other the hard questions: What can we do to promote economic growth and job creation? What kind of trade policies are fair to the working people of our countries? How can we promote economic growth in a way that advances sustainable development in the poorer countries of the world so that they do not squander their resources and, in the end, assure that all these endeavors fail? These are profoundly significant questions. They are being asked in a multilateral forum for the first time in a serious way. And this is of great significance.

In the end, no matter what we do with security concerns or what we do with economic concerns, the heart of our mission must be the same as it was on Normandy's beaches a half a century ago, that is, democracy. For after all, democracy is the glue that can cement economic reforms and security cooperation. That is why our third goal must be to consolidate Europe's recent democratic gains.

This goal resonates with the fundamental ideals of both of our republics. It is, after all, how we got started. It also serves our most fundamental security interests, for democracy is a powerful deterrent; it checks the dark ambitions of would-be tyrants and aggressors as it respects the bright hopes of free citizens.

Together, our two nations and others have launched a major effort to support democracy in the former Communist states. Progress will not come overnight. There will be uneven developments, but already we see encouraging and sometimes breathtaking results. We have seen independent television stations established where once only the state's version of the truth was broadcast. We've seen thousands of people from the former Communist world, students, bankers, political leaders, come to our nations to learn the ways and the uses of freedom. We've seen new constitutions written and new states founded around the principles that inspired our own republics at their birth. Ultimately, we need to foster democratic bonds not only within these former Communist states but also among our states and theirs.

There is a language of democracy spoken among nations. It is expressed in the way we work out our differences, in the way we treat each other's citizens, in the way we honor each other's heritages. It is the language our two republics have spoken with each other for over 200 years. It is the language that the Western Allies spoke during the Second World War.

Now we have the opportunity to hear the language of democracy spoken across this entire continent. And if we can achieve that goal, we will have paid a great and lasting tribute to those from both our countries who fought and died for freedom 50 years ago.

Nearly 25 years after D-Day, an American veteran who had served as a medic in that invasion returned to Normandy. He strolled down Omaha Beach, where he had landed in June of 1944, and then walked inland a ways to a nearby village. There, he knocked on a door that seemed familiar. A Frenchwoman answered the door and then turned suddenly and called to her husband. ''He's back. The American doctor is back,'' she called. After a moment, the husband arrived, carrying a wine bottle covered with dust and cobwebs. ''Welcome, Doctor,'' he cried. ''In 1944, we hid this bottle away for the time when you would return. Now let us celebrate.''

Well, this week, that process of joyous rediscovery and solemn remembrance happened all over again. It unfolded in countless reunions, planned and unplanned. As our people renewed old bonds, let us also join to resume the timeless work that brought us here in the first place and that brought our forebears together 200 years ago, the work of fortifying freedom's foundation and building a lasting peace for generations to come. I believe we can do it. It is the only ultimate tribute we can give for the ultimate lesson of World War II and Normandy.

Thank you. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:13 p.m. at the Palais Bourbon.

Interview With the French Media in Paris

June 7, 1994

Europe

Q. Are you disappointed with Europe today as opposed to the kind of determination it showed 50 years ago?

President Clinton. No. No, because I don't think the two situations are easily comparable; it's not the same thing. I think the real question is, how is Europe today as compared with after the Second World War or after the First World War? And I think the answer is, we're doing much better than we did after the First World War, in a roughly similar time, with a lot of uncertainty in the world but where no one's security seems to be immediately at risk.

I see Europe coming together politically, economically, in terms of security. I see more cooperation with the United States economically with GATT, in terms of security with NATO and the Partnership For Peace. I see us working together to try to deal with the problem of Bosnia. I know it has not been solved, but after all, some progress has been made. The conflict has been limited. The Croatians and the Muslims have made an agreement. We are on the verge of getting a recommended territorial settlement from our contact group.

So I think that Europe is on the way to a better situation in the 21st century. Have we solved all the problems? No. But I'm optimistic, especially after this trip.

[*At this point, a question was asked and President François Mitterrand answered in French, but the translation was incomplete.*]

Bosnia

Q. I'd like to ask President Clinton a question, hoping that—[*inaudible*]—problem—[*inaudible*]—President of your country—[*inaudible*]—and he said that after 1919—[*inaudible*]—everything seems possible today. [*Inaudible*]—are coming out of a long period of—[*inaudible*]—this is the best—[*inaudible*]—perhaps one day he might ask your boys to intervene again, for instance, in Bosnia?

President Clinton. I do think the situation is similar to 1919, not the same but similar. But the difference is that in 1919, Europe did not unite and the United States withdrew. In 1994, Europe is growing together in terms of the economy and the political system and the security system, and the United States is still actively engaged in Europe.

Are there circumstances under which we might commit American troops? Absolutely, there are. First of all, we still have a NATO commitment, which we intend to honor. Secondly, we have already put our pilots at the disposal of NATO in Bosnia in enforcing the no-fly zone and in having the airlift for humanitarian reasons. We have troops in——

Q. [*Inaudible*]—more on the ground?

President Clinton. Well, we have troops in Macedonia also to limit the conflict. We have said we would put in troops to enforce an agreement if an agreement was made but that we did not believe the United States should go into Bosnia to try to resolve the conflict in favor of one side or the other. And I think if we were involved there now in the U.N. mission, it would only make for more controversy and increase the likelihood of the international community being pulled into the conflict.

If we can get the parties to agree—and I think President Mitterrand and I agree on this—if we can get the parties to agree to a settlement, then the United States is prepared to work with our allies to make sure that settlement is honored.